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Haliburton County's Local Weekly Newspaper

Vol 1 Issue 8

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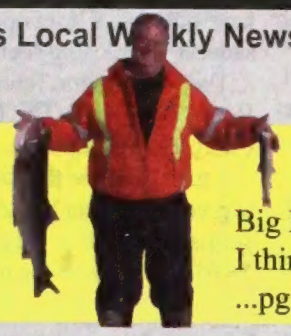

Big Fish? I think so! ...pg 11

Boogie at the Legion ...pg. 3B

One Night Away from Fortune & Fame

This Band is on a Roll

Lea Harper
County Voice

Obsidian: Dark volcanic rock. Polished. Forged by fire. Hard. Thrusting out. Extrusive. Which is not a bad metaphor for a five-man band who have hammered out their own unique sound -- a red hot fusion of hard rock, punk and metal – one that will stand the test of time.

With the help of a FACTOR grant, Obsidian was able to make a video for the song "Ultimate Disaster" which became an ultimate success getting instant rotation on MuchMusic last year. In a poetic yet fundamental way, 'Ultimate Disaster' addresses the human struggle – the rise and fall and the consequent test of faith. *I found God but I don't think he remembers me. I fall down with the ashes of his memory* are the opening lines.

This Indie band is currently promoting a five song demo and a Limited Edition EP (available through Maple Music and Itunes) produced by Matt DeMatteo whose impeccable musical instincts have boosted the careers of successful artists like Big Wreck and Juno award winner Edwin. DeMatteo's walls aren't plastered with platinum records for nothing. Obsidian front man Turi Mercuri calls him "a genius". DeMatteo is working with the band on spec which means he believes in these guys and knows that the year they've spent in his recording studio is going to pay off.

There is an easy camaraderie between band members, an evident simpatico -- the kind of chemistry that comes from having a shared vision and seeing it through together. The band

Story cont'd... pg. 13 ...

The Band Left to Right - Ryan Chalmers,Kevin Brezina, Philip Elliott, Turi Mercuri and Andrew Postlethwaite

Minden Woman Fatally Injured In Car Crash

Family and friends remember a remarkable young woman taken too soon

Mark Arike
Staff Reporter

Those who knew 26-year old Teresa Kasepchuk of Minden say she was a happy, smart and creative young woman, who had "everything going for her". Tragically, Teresa was taken away from all those friends and family members who loved her so very much in a car wreck that seems to have been completely preventable.

On, Wednesday, March 12th Teresa was on her way to a job interview in Toronto. Along with her to show their support were sisters Kim (15) and Ashlee (17). At around noon while traveling along Cty Rd. 27. north of Hwy. 9 near Schomberg, a Kia Rio, driven by a 59-year old Toronto man, flipped onto its roof and slid into the path of Teresa's Pontiac 6000. Police are investigating allegations that the man was driving aggressively, weaving in and out of traffic.

Teresa succumbed to her injuries shortly after arrival at Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto. Her sister Kim faced internal bleeding, a badly broken leg and serious abdominal injuries. Ashlee was treated for minor injuries and was released on Friday, two days after the accident. The driver of the other vehicle died at the scene.

"It's been devastating to lose her," said Teresa's grieving 29-year old brother, Jason Kasepchuk. "She was my sister but also my best friend. Teresa had a big heart. She was loving and stubborn. She'd give a lot of herself, but she'd also expect a lot back from others," he said, while describing his younger sister. "She was a very arts oriented,

Story cont'd... pg. 2 ...

OPP is Asking for Public's Help in Nabbing Suspects Who Robbed Sunny's Variety

Do You Have Information That Could Help Solve this Case?

Two suspects involved in an armed robbery that took place at Sunny's Variety on Bobcaygeon Rd in Minden on Friday, March 14, are still on the loose.

On the night of the incident a call was placed to the OPP at approximately 7:20 pm, after two males entered the store and one threatened an employee with a knife. The suspects fled the scene after demanding and obtaining a quantity of cash.

One of the suspects is described as being 6 feet tall, with a thin build and a black hoody, a blue handkerchief over his face and baggy jeans.

Male suspect #2 is slightly under 6 feet tall with a thin build. He was wearing a black jacket with a white zipper, blue handkerchief over his face, black ball cap on backwards, baggy blue jeans and was carrying a light blue knapsack. It is believed that the suspects fled the scene in a grey or silver older model Chevrolet Cavalier.

Story cont'd... pg. 2 ...

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Minden Family Grieves Over Sudden Loss

Teresa Left a Lasting Imprint ... from pg 1

intelligent girl."

Teresa was a graphics coordinator. Her special effects work was used in films, including most recently, the 2007 movie Resident Evil: Extinction.

The loss of such a talented, sweet-spirited girl has been extremely hard for her close friends, the community and especially for her family.

"I'm at a loss for words. My dad is having a very hard time," said Jason. "Her boyfriend is grieving pretty badly right now."

The tragedy has also placed a financial strain onto the family, along with the emotional damage.

"My dad is off work because he has a hurt back. My mom is a stay-at-home mom," said Jason of the current situation. "Kimmy probably won't be able to walk for three months and Ashlee might need therapy."

The Kasepchuk family has always spent lots of quality family time together. Jason reminisced of how they have always been a close-knit group.

"We'd go to movies, go hot-tubbing, family functions…" said her brother. "She had a lot of friends who are going to miss her. She was very special."

Even those who just recently came to know Teresa, say that she left a lasting imprint on their lives.

"She was fun to talk to, really smart…she was a fun person to be around," said Jessica Elliot of Haliburton, who met Teresa just a year ago. "She was really happy in life. She had a good boyfriend and everything going for her."

When the news spread of Teresa's death, an online Facebook group was launched in memory of the blonde-haired, brown-eyed, vibrant woman named: "In Loving Memory of Teresa Kasepchuk." Since it was started, people immediately began joining. Currently, there are over 460 members, including many who had a deep, personal connection with her, along with those who may have only had a brief opportunity to meet her. All share one thing in common, and that is their sadness over losing such a precious, remarkable person.

The viewing for Teresa was held on Wednesday, March 19, at the Gordon Monk Funeral Home in Minden. The funeral will be held today at 11 am at Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church in Minden.

A trust fund for the family has been set-up at the Minden CIBC. The family would greatly appreciate any and all donations that will go towards assisting them financially during this very difficult time. The transit number for the fund is 01542, and the account number is 75-677-31. The phone number is 705 286-2991. ■

Left to Right: Ashlee Kasepchuk, Teresa Kasepchuck and Kim Kasepchuk

Sunny's Robbed at Knife Point

... from pg 1

We spoke with the store owners, Kim Munjung and Choe Sungsik, but both were too distraught to give us statements about the robbery.

The sister of one of the owners of the store said that since Sunny's Convenience first opened twenty years ago no crime like this has ever taken place.

Anyone with information on the incident is asked to call the OPP Communications Centre at 1-888-310-1122 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477). Crime Stoppers is completely anonymous and does not subscribe to call display. You will not testify in court and may be eligible for a cash reward of up to $2000. ■

Your Unofficial Lotto Numbers

LOTTO 649
March 15, 2008
03 09 11 19 30 39
Bonus Number 20
Encore 2380975

SUPER 7
March 14, 2008
12 22 27 29 37 43 44
Bonus Number 11
Encore 6455741

These are all unofficial numbers. To confirm a win please visit www.olg.ca or visit a local authorized OLG dealer.

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THURSDAY

Mostly cloudy, chance a few snow showers

▲ 1° ▼ -6°

FRIDAY

Partly cloudy and seasonably cold

▲ 1° ▼ -9°

SATURDAY

Mostly sunny and colder

▲ -3° ▼ -12°

SUNDAY

Partly cloudy and not as cold

▲ 1° ▼ -9°

MONDAY

Partly to mostly cloudy and cold

▲ 1° ▼ -8°

TUESDAY

Cloudy with light snow developing

▲ 1° ▼ -7°

WEDNESDAY

Partly sunny and cold

▲ 1° ▼ -5°

AROUND THE REGION: It will be a bit breezy on Thursday with a few snow showers and flurries possible. It will be cold as highs will be near 1. Sunshine will return to the area on Friday. It will remain cold though as highs will be near 0. The dry and cold weather will continue through the weekend with highs near 3 below on Saturday and near 1 on Sunday.

Algonquin Provincial Park
Ontario
Lake Ontario
Toronto
Oshawa
North York
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Belleville
Kingston
Huntsville
Bracebridge
Gravenhurst
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Midland
Penetanguishene
Collingwood
Owen Sound
Wasaga Beach
Cobourg
Port Hope
Newcastle
Pickering
Ajax
Whitby
Brampton
Mississauga
Oakville
Milton
Georgetown
Guelph
Kitchener
Waterloo
Cambridge
Stratford
Woodstock
Brantford
Hamilton
St. Catharines
Niagara Falls
Welland
Fort Erie
Port Colborne
Grimsby
Lincoln
Niagara-on-the-Lake
Simcoe
Tillsonburg
Norfolk
Dunnville
Haldimand
Caledonia
Six Nations
Brant
Paris
Ingersoll
Tavistock
Listowel
Wingham
Goderich
Exeter
Clinton
Seaforth
Mitchell
Stratford
St. Marys
Tillsonburg
Simcoe
Delhi
Port Dover
Dunnville
Fort Erie
Niagara Falls
St. Catharines
Welland
Port Colborne
Grimsby
Lincoln
Niagara-on-the-Lake
Hamilton
Brantford
Paris
Cambridge
Kitchener
Waterloo
Guelph
Georgetown
Milton
Oakville
Mississauga
Brampton
Caledon
Orangeville
Shelburne
Dundalk
Flesherton
Markdale
Meaford
Thornbury
Collingwood
Wasaga Beach
Penetanguishene
Midland
Orillia
Barrie
Innisfil
Bradford
Newmarket
Aurora
Richmond Hill
Markham
Stouffville
Uxbridge
Scugog
Port Perry
Brock
Scugog
Kawartha Lakes
Lindsay
Bobcaygeon
Fenelon Falls
Coboconk
Minden
Haliburton
Dorset
Huntsville
Bracebridge
Gravenhurst
Port Sydney
Utterson
Dwight
Novar
Sprucedale
Burk's Falls
Magnetawan
South River
Sundridge
Commanda
Trout Creek
Powassan
Nipissing
Kiosk
Sturgeon Falls
Verner
North Bay
Callander
Mattawa
Deep River
Chalk River
Petawawa
Pembroke
Renfrew
Arnprior
Almonte
Carleton Place
Smiths Falls
Perth
Brockville
Prescott
Gananoque
Kingston
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Trenton
Picton
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Madoc
Marmora
Campbellford
Norwood
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Peterborough
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Cardiff
Wilberforce
Tory Hill
Gooderham
Minden
Kinmount
Norland
Coboconk
Fenelon Falls
Buckhorn
Bridgenorth
Lakefield
Peterborough
Lindsay
Omemee
Millbrook
Cavan
Orono
Newcastle
Bowmanville
Oshawa
Whitby
Ajax
Pickering
Markham
Richmond Hill
Aurora
Newmarket
Bradford
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Midland
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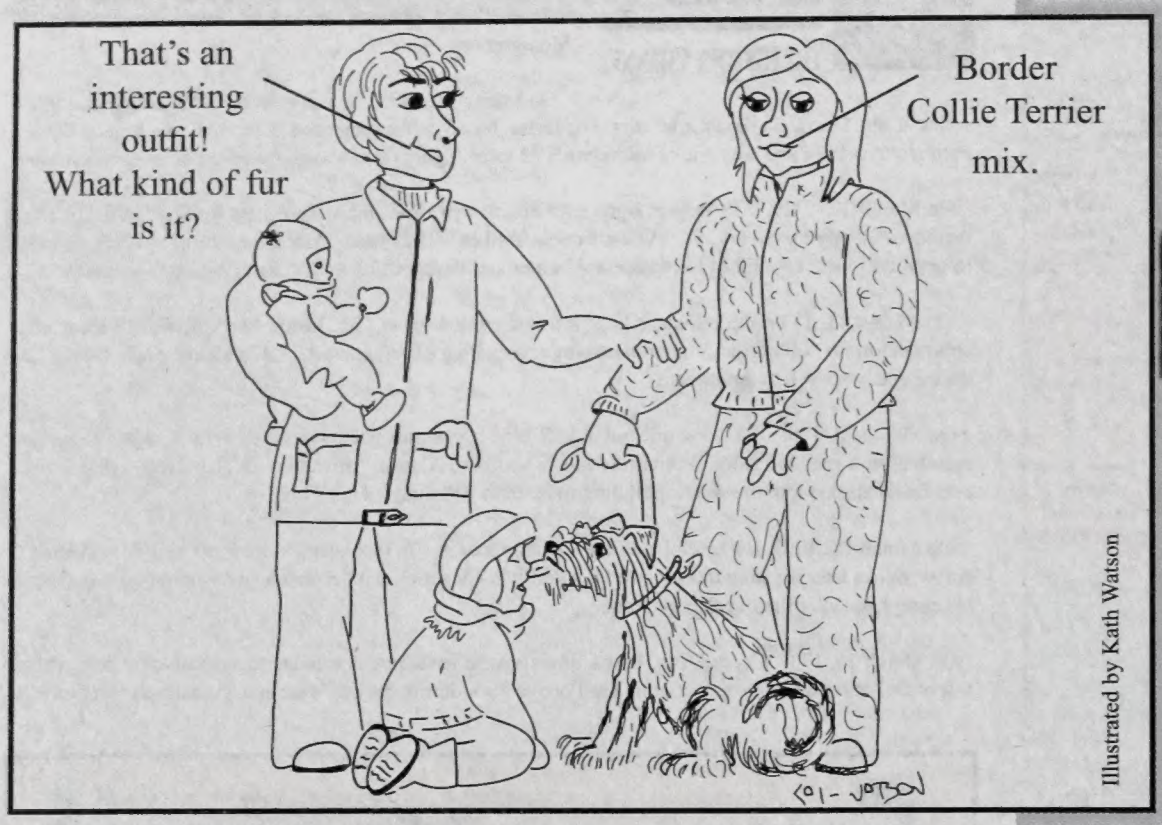
County Voice



Illustrated by Kath Watson

Letter of the Week

Dear Editor:

"Thank goodness for Hilda Clark"

I have noticed a trend in our communities that many of our older buildings and services are unable to stay open due to the onerous costs of converting a building to be accessible and structural repairs. As this is a policy of the Ontario Human Rights Commission the costs need to be shared by the Province to help build a province whose buildings and services are accessible to all people in all communities in Ontario and brought up to present day standards. It is time to ask the provincial government to support and revitalize small communities in Ontario and not shut us down because we do not have the funding to upgrade our facilities. Thank goodness for people like Hilda Clark who look for other solutions and help small communities stay vital.
Darlene Buckingham ■

Dear Editor:

Expression of Opinion Appreciated

I'm so glad you printed the article about Laurie Scott's approval of the proposed Peterborough-Toronto rail link. It proves she's still alive and hasn't resigned, emigrated or otherwise departed from us. Furthermore, it shows she *can* express an opinion!

From her total silence on the subjects of asphalt plants and uranium mining, the residents of Highlands East were beginning to think otherwise.

Yours truly,
Brenda Harvey ■

More Letters... pg. 7...

Letters To The Editor Welcomed !!

We love getting Letters to the Editor - so let us know what you have to say. You can email them to letters@countyvoice.ca, or mail to Letters - Box 930 Haliburton, Ont. K0M 1S0 - or drop them off at the office located in the lower level of Stedman's Mall in Haliburton.

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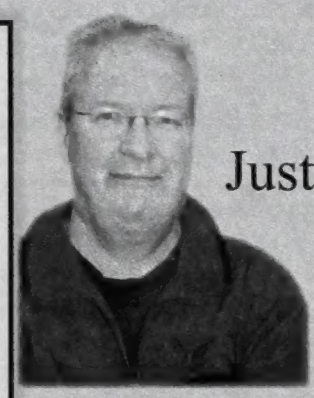
EDITORIAL VIEWPOINT



By Stephen Patrick

Just the Facts, Ma'am, Just the Facts.

In the County Voice's first editorial I wrote the following:

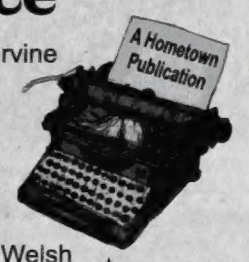
"'Sunlight is the best disinfectant', said the Supreme Court Judge, and we won't disagree. In any community rumour and innuendo can be a corrosive force: when you don't name persons who've been apprehended and charged by the police, everyone becomes a suspect. So we will report arrests, and we will follow through local criminal cases to their conclusion."

This will continue to be our policy. We have been reporting arrests, as details become available to us, and we attend the monthly court sessions in Minden. We have not, however, reported on all the cases that are presented at the Minden court. The court docket, which details the individual charges that are to be addressed by the judge in that session, can run to over 100 instances sometimes involving 30 or 40 individuals. We want to report the news, but the Police Gazette we're not. There are also some logistical and legal difficulties that we encounter due to some of the policies and legal restrictions of the criminal justice system, including the police and the courts. The local OPP, for example, do not issue press releases for every single arrest they make, even with impaired driving charges. Constable Mark McMaster, Community Services Officer for the Minden OPP, says that they issue as many as they can, and will endeavour to make certain all arrests related to alcohol and driving be made public. After all, public identification of these arrests is a major deterrent factor in any community. But McMaster points out, rightly, that the police do not release information about arrests until the suspect has been formally charged, a court date issued, and the suspect released pending that appearance. Also, in more serious cases, such as child molestation charges for example, they must withhold any information that might help reveal the alleged victim's identity. "We want to make sure the public's informed," says McMaster, "but in some cases we must be very careful, not only to protect the victims, but also protect our own investigation."

We don't believe for a second that the local OPP wants to suppress public information: Constable McMaster has always been as helpful as possible to all Haliburton media, where he can. Also, he does have a few other things to do besides writing press releases for media hounds. But given that we're the only media outlet in the County which regularly reports these matters, it's important that we continue to provide what coverage we can. The April 18th, 1979 issue of the Minden Times published the following editorial, and we quote, in part: "The printing of police reports such as robberies, murders, or even the simplest car accident has always been a touchy subject. The slightest misunderstanding of the printed word could find the newspaper in the middle of a libel suit, or worse, it could ruin an innocent person's reputation for a long time to come… most people believe once a person is charged, he is automatically convicted… it is with this in mind that this newspaper will no longer be printing any charges laid until the person charged with the offence either pleads guilty to the crime or the courts begin to try his case."

That policy has effectively determined Haliburton County media's approach to court matters for the past 30 years. We politely disagree, and believe that our readers, and the general public, deserve the right to know the facts, as well as the final outcome of cases. With regards to the Minden Court proceedings, we will begin to print the simple and unvarnished details of all cases that have been resolved, each month, both convictions and acquittals. And we will continue to print the names of those arrested each week when the police investigations and court policy allow. We welcome your comments, as always, on this and other matters. ■

The County Voice



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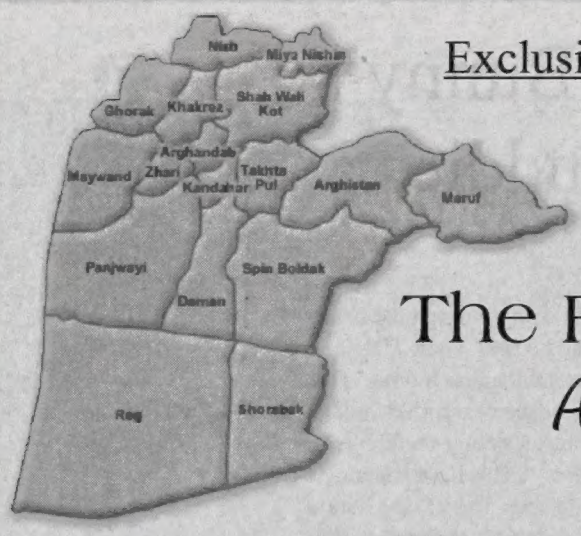

Exclusive to the County Voice - Part 8

The Road to Kandahar

A Soldier's Journal

by Captain David Beatty

Sand, Snow and Administration

With Exercise SOUTHERN BEAR now behind us, we have all returned to Canada to shake out the sand (in this case on the driveway as we got hit with a nice snow fall just after getting home) and continue with our preparations for deployment.

First off on day one back to work were the media pictures – those are the individual pictures which you hope they never have to use. Prior to deployments all members must have an individual picture taken which is released to the press in the event of injury or death. What was comical was watching individuals wading through the waist deep snow with their arid camouflage uniforms to get the pictures taken; I trust this was Mother Nature's way of reminding us that we are no longer basking in the 27 degree heat of Texas anymore.

The next few days were filled with various presentations from Veteran's Affairs – explaining how they assist Canadian Forces personnel who get injured while in theatre and how to go about filing a claim. Several briefings were also held to inform everyone of the transformation of several agencies which will be helping out our families while we are deployed. Of note was the new mandate of the Director Military Family Services (DMFS), which now is the responsible authority for "effective, responsive and coordinated CF family services and CF family policy". In essence this becomes the first line of assistance for family who have members deployed overseas. They provide emergency daycare, access to computers, assist in sending packages to deployed members and can arrange video conferences with your spouse and children.

The Director Casualty Support and Administration (DCSA) provided an informative briefing on exactly what happens to an individual who is wounded and the system which is in place to support your family at home. Under our current system, a wounded soldier will be treated at Kandahar Airfield (KAF) for minor injuries, the more serious will be taken to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center (LRMC) in Germany, were they will be treated or stabilized for further evacuation back to Canada. The important 'take away' from this briefing was the requirement for family members to have a valid passport, as in the event that a soldier is injured and requires evacuation to LRMC, the soldier's immediate family will be flown over. An excellent idea which seemed to be well received by all present, however in my case, if my wife really wants a trip back to Germany, she had better be prepared to book it herself as I have no intention of using the DCSA as a travel agency – I like my legs just were they are!

The next briefing held was the most popular and as a result put last on the list – the leave policy for the tour. Canadian soldiers, unlike their American counter parts, are normally deployed for a maximum of six months. During this period they receive a 14 day leave package which they can use to either return to Canada or go to a third location (in reality it is 19 days, but five are allocated to travel). In our case, we are deploying for a period in excess of nine months and have been granted a total of two leave packages. To many of the readers this may seem extreme, but please remember soldiers deployed to Afghanistan work seven days a week, normally 16 hours per day. They are under constant threat of injury or death, they live in conditions where privacy is not a consideration. Therefore having a soldier take a 14 day break mid tour allows them to recharge their batteries, which in turn may save their lives or the lives of their comrades.

With the week of administrative briefings now behind us, and the sand for the most part shaken out of the equipment and put on the driveway, we have all set off for two weeks of leave and personal administration (in other works time to sort out the last of your personal affairs) as our deployment date is rapidly approaching and besides it is Maple Syrup season! (Ed note: please see article on the Beatty sugar bush on page 16) ■

Where we go from here:

The time for Captain David Beatty's departure for Afghanistan is approaching rapidly. Many Canadians, while supporting Beatty and his fellow soldiers to the hilt, have considerable reservations about the mission.

Early in March Prime Minister Stephen Harper presented a revised motion to the Parliament on the future of the Afghan mission, which was supported by the Official Opposition. Haliburton – Kawartha Lakes – Brock MP Barry Devolin has commented that "It is encouraging to know there is some fundamental common ground between the Government and the Official Opposition, particularly the agreement that the mission should continue until 2011. As well, it was agreed upon that operational decisions should be left to Canadian commanders on the ground in Afghanistan.

"It is now clear the Government of Canada will notify NATO of our intention to end our presence in Kandahar as of July 2011. The plan is to have our troops gradually replaced by Afghan forces as soon as possible, so that it will have been completed by December 2011."

Over the next six weeks of so (military schedules are not publicly released, and are always subject to change) Captain Beatty will be writing on such diverse subjects as what to pack in your UAB (Unaccompanied Baggage), the Mission Validation Exercise, the Deployment Ceremony, and of course the final arrival in Kandahar. As always, we welcome you views on these columns and on the Afghan mission as a whole. ■

Captain David Beatty spends time off with his parents in Haliburton

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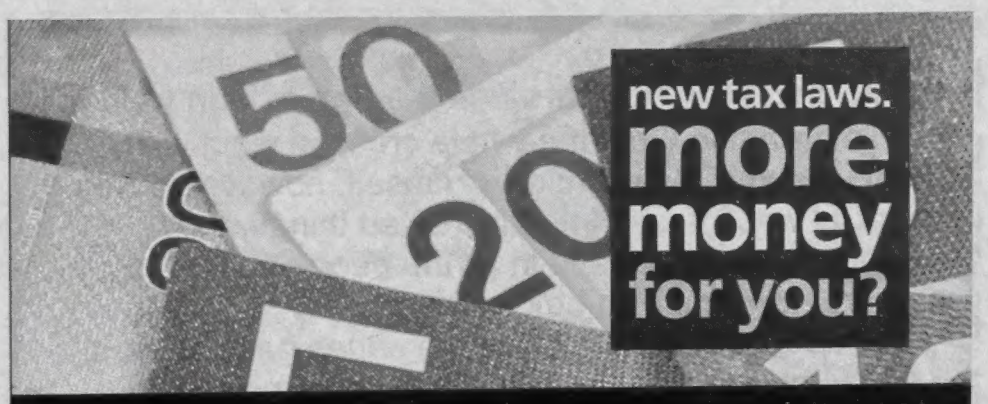

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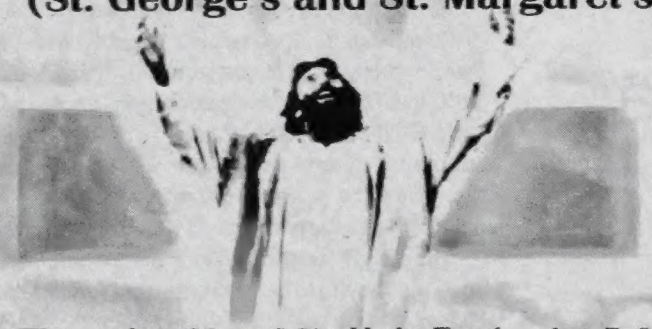

Maundy Thursday (Mar. 20): Holy Eucharist 5:00 p.m. at St. M's; 7:30 p.m. at St. G's

Good Friday (Mar. 21):11:30 a.m. at St. G's; 2:00 p.m. at St. M's

Easter Vigil (Mar. 22): 6:30 p.m. at St. M's

Easter Sunday (Mar. 23): Holy Eucharist 9:30 a.m. at St. G's; 11:15 at St. M's

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e-mail: stsgeorge.margaret@bellnet.ca

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HOLY WEEK

Schedule of Services

2008

Good Friday
March 21th at 3pm

Easter Sunday Mass
March 23rd at 11am

Celebration of Divine Mercy
Sunday, March 30th at 3pm
with Fr. Pat McNulty
"The Power in the Name of Jesus"

St. Anthony of Padua
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KNOW THOU that when the Son of Man yielded up His breath to God, the whole creation wept with a great weeping. By sacrificing Himself, however, a fresh capacity was infused into all created things. Its evidences, as witnessed in all the peoples of the earth, and are now manifest before thee.

The deepest wisdom which the sages have uttered, the profoundest learning which any mind hath unfolded, the arts which the ablest hands have produced, the influence exerted by the most potent of rulers, are but manifestations of the quickening power released by His transcendent, His all-pervasive,and resplendent Spirit. We testify that when He came into the world, He shed the splendor of His glory upon all created things... Blessed is the man who, with a face beaming with light, hath turned towards Him.

Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the writings of Baha'u'llah

Baha'i Community of Dysart
www://bahai.org/

The Easter Bunny's Sneaky Buddies.

by Kathleen Atkinson-Hindle

Miss waking up Easter morning and tearing through the house looking for goodies from the Easter bunny? Want that little rush of excitement and thrill of the hunt once more? This Easter Sunday, March 23rd there will be many surprises hidden throughout Haliburton waiting for unsuspecting recipients to find them. A group calling themselves " The Easter Bunny's little Buddies" are planning on doing their Easter egg hunt a little bit differently this year. They didn't want their identity disclosed because as one said " that would ruin the whole point, the whole idea behind what we're trying to do here, which is to be anonymous and sneaky!"

Apparently these generous souls came up with a plan to deck the town of Haliburton with art, toys and inspirational messages for you and I to stumble upon throughout the day " to make people smile, to make them just take a second and feel a little jolt of excitement: we wanted to get the town to participate together in something even if they didn't realize it. The next thing we knew Easter was coming and the idea of hiding gifts through out the town for who ever finds them just seemed like too much fun!"

The Bunny Buddies are a group of people from our community who will be taking this idea and running with it for Easter Sunday morning. They are inviting others in the community who wish to participate to feel free to leave little messages, presents or knick knacks throughout the town for others to find to brighten up their day.

"We want to promote the idea of toys or little messages instead of candies and chocolates and we want people to remember this whole thing is for fun and a great way to communicate and participate with people we might other wise never bother to." So there you go, the opportunity to go hunting on Easter morning is once more upon us so if you miss looking for goodies you might just find a little present waiting for you in town, on a parking meter perhaps or maybe on a bench or a set of stairs, keep your eyes peeled and good luck! ■

Conserving the Energy in Our Community
2008 Winter Enviro Fair Brings Several Exhibitors and Guest Speaker to Haliburton

It was an event focused on the importance of conserving energy for the sake of our environment.

On Saturday, March 15, from 9 am – 2 pm, the 2008 Winter Enviro Fair was hosted by The Kinark Outdoor Centre. The event was put on at the Sustainable Living Centre located on Queen's Line south of Highway 118 and west of Carnarvon. The Ontario Ministry of Energy's Community Conservation Initiative Program helped fund the event. The Haliburton Highlands Stewardship Council was also on-board with the initiative.

"Our Enviro Fair at the Sustainable Living Centre was a great success. Many people from the surrounding communities showed their support by attending," said Lindsay Christie, Sustainable Living Centre Coordinator.

There were approximately 50 interested inviduals who came to attend the exhibits and see the guest speaker. Exhibitors for this years second-annual event included: HavenCraft Homes and Geothermal, Ontario Society for Environmental Education (OSEE), Out to Learn, Evergreen Power Solutions, R.D. Lawrence Place, Know your Home Inspections, Gaia Centre, Earthtones Studio, Greenspace Homes & Cottages and artisan Nate Snelle. These vendors and exhibitors were from around the community and focused on environmental awareness with Earth-friendly themes and products.

Special guest speaker and eco-focused home inspector, Pam Sayne, was also there to talk about saving energy and reducing climate change for homeowners. Sayne is a Registered Home Inspector (RHI) and Certified Energy Advisor (CEA).

"With such wonderful support, the Kinark Outdoor Centre's Sustainable Living Centre will gladly continue to put on these kinds of events for the community," says Christie.

The Sustainable Living Centre was built from straw bale construction and uses alternative energy solutions. It has been the new program area for many schools and interested workshop participants over the past year. Programs being taught at the centre focus on sustainable living, energy conservation and environmental awareness. ■

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"Adversity causes some men to break; others to break records."

-William A. Ward

Brampton Battalion Capture Central Division Title

Haliburton's Matt Duchene & Cody Hodgson Shine

Terrance Gavan
Sports Editor

Talk about déjà vu.

Last Easter, Cody Hodgson and Matt Duchene were playing hockey together, just like they've been doing for the better part of their adolescent lives.

Both grew up in the Haliburton minor hockey system

And when we say grew up; we're not just shoveling smoke.

Both Duchene and Hodgson first donned skates for Haliburton when they were four and they spent their early formative years moving up through the ranks of the Haliburton minor hockey association.

They have shifted like doppelgangers through every stage of their hockey careers. Duchene one year younger, but seemingly ready to absorb motivation from every positive turn in Hodgson's illustrious repertoire.

Both, riding talent's whim, with an erudition that belies age.

Sliding inexorably toward a date with destiny. Honed edges with an undercurrent of that intangible je ne sais quoi.

The similarities are eerie.

Both are great kids; academically sound; multi-talented; self-effacing; coachable to the max; and grounded by dint of strong family and community ties.

Hodgson and his family moved to Markham back in 1997, but they own a summer cottage here and he allows that he spends a great deal of his summers with old friends here in the Highlands. Father Chris Hodgson was the MPP for the area from 1994 to 2003. He retired early to spend more time with his growing family.

"It's funny that you mention the Coby Tournament. It's interesting because Matt and I were playing in the Coby Tourney last Easter and we won the A-Side final," chuckled Hodgson, on the phone from his Markham home on Monday evening. (Cody's brother and a cousin will be playing in the 30th Annual Easter Tournament again this weekend.)

This Easter, the two Haliburton products will once more be playing together.

Of course both players will admit that the stakes are exponentially higher.

And, they won't be tooling around on the familiar panoply of Minden and Dysart Arenas.

The Battalion open their best-of-seven OHL junior series versus Barrie Colts tonight at home.

Duchene and Hodgson will be centering two highly respected lines.

This is the oft-eulogized second season and for any young hockey player in the OHL, the playoffs mean that it's time to unearth some extra tools. Dust off the laissez-faire and trot out the "laissez les bon temps roullet."

Hodgson and Duchene are both hoping that good times will be rollin' for the Bramptom Battalion on Thursday.

"Coach (GM and coach Stan Butler) gave us the day off from practice today, but tomorrow and Wednesday we'll be back on the ice preparing for Barrie," explains Hodgson, who is in his second year with the Battalion.

"They put us out of the playoffs in the first round last year, but we're a different club this year," he added.

Matt Duchene is in his first year with the Battalion and like his comrade Hodgson, Duchene was a first round pick of the Troops in the OHL minor league draft. Hodgson was Butler's first selection in the 2006 minor league draft and Duchene was the Troops' first selection in 2007.

Both are centers. Both are academically gifted. Indeed, Hodgson was recognized at the annual awards' night held after the Battalion's final tilt of the season.

Hodgson, who turned 18 on Feb. 18, was recognized as both the most sportsmanlike and top scholastic player. He was named the club's top scholastic player last season as well.

Not to be outdone, Duchene was named the team's top academic performer for the first semester earlier this season.

Duchene, like Hodgson, came in with high expectations.

Butler is an astute judge of potential. But, in an interview earlier this summer, Butler confided that talent is but one of the ingredients that he uses to assess players.

He allowed that in choosing Hodgson and Duchene, he noted that both excelled in every facet of their lives. Both had outside interests, both were strong academically and both had supportive families.

"That's important," said Butler at the time.

Duchene concurs with his coach and said, in a phone interview from his Brampton billet on Saturday night that he has learned a great deal from Brampton's coach and General Manager.

"Stan has been real good for me." said Duchene. "I've been building and growing as a player and as a person and that's Stan. He's a good teacher."

A man of few words, Butler seems ready to let his players work the blueprint.

He builds, they grow.

Hodgson entered the 2007-08 campaign as one of International Scouting Service's top-10 rated prospects for the 2008 NHL Entry Draft. He completed his rookie campaign as one of the league's top freshmen with 23 goals and 23 assists for 46 points in 63 games.

And he tied Sarnia Sting star center Steven Stamkos as Canada's leading scorer at the 2007 under-18 World Cup tournament in the Czech Republic.

Hodgson said that the Czech tourney was a highlight.

"That was just a great experience. I had a chance to play with some great players .It was a chance to see and play with a lot of guys who I normally play against," said Hodgson, adding, "and I personally had a pretty good tournament, which was nice, because there is a lot of pressure in those tournaments."

Hodgson was also one of Team Ontario's leading performers at the 2007 Canada Winter Games at Whitehorse, Yukon.

Over two seasons with the Battalion, Hodgson is now scoring at a point a game clip. He has 131 points in 131 total games. He says that a lot of that has to do with attaining a comfort level in the sophomore campaign.

"I definitely felt more comfortable in my second year in the league," said Hodgson, who had 40 goals and 45 assists for 85 points in 63 games this year.

"I know the league a bit better and know the buildings," he added. "It's question of getting more comfortable over time."

Duchene seems to be finding his niche as the season winds inexorably to pressure cooker.

The fifth overall pick in the OHL Priority Selection last May, Duchene finished with 30 goals and 20 assists for 50 points in 64 games, tying Lukas Havel and Michael Vernace for the fifth-highest rookie point total in club history. Only Raffi Torres – now with Edmonton Oilers - scored more goals in his first season, with 35 in 1998-99.

Duchene scored two goals – including the game winner - and added one assist to pace the Brampton Battalion to a 5-3 Ontario Hockey League victory Sunday over the Kingston Frontenacs. That gave the Troops a club-record 23rd home win. Duchene's game-winner gives him four winning tallies for the season. (Hodgson tied a Battalion record for game winning goals with his eighth clinching tally against Peterborough Petes in a game held last Wednesday, March 12.)

Coach and GM Stan Butler had nothing but praise for his young rookie's performance.

"I was happy for Matt," said Butler. "There was no doubt he had a lot of energy today (Sunday)."

Of course, earlier this year, Duchene also had an opportunity to represent Team Ontario and was a major factor as Ontario defeated Team

Story cont'd... pg.11 ...

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Pronger Deserved More

NHL Needs an Enforcer

Terrance Gavan
Sports Editor

Sports Column

Chris Pronger's latest suspension is just another in a long litany of pseudo-psycho events in this tough guy's storied career.

Pronger got eight games for using an open blade to inflict punishment on Ryan Kesler in a game in Vancouver last Wednesday.

Kesler's sin? Wrapping his legs around the big guy for a second as he tried to get back onto his feet during a collision along the end boards.

Pronger's reaction? A full-fledged and totally unwarranted tramp onto the leg of the prone Kesler.

Here's what I think about that.

This is not the first time Pronger has delivered a swift quick to an opponent. When he was with the St. Louis Blues, back in 2004, Pronger was suspended for one game for kicking Calgary Flames forward Ville Nieminen. Kicking him. Arrogance is an ugly trait. It's especially ugly when it moves to violent arrogance. Mr. Pronger, in the course of his career has been suspended 8 times.

Here's what I think about that.

This tells me that Mr. Pronger has absolutely no respect for another player's right to earn a living in the NHL. His pretense is toughness. His modus operandi? A hasty application of the errant elbow, lowered shoulder or knee-jerk boot to body. It tells me that Pronger is self-important. There are undercurrents of self-entitlement. It tells me that he is unencumbered of a professional ethic. And that's just ugly. And reprehensible.

Let's not subvert the seriousness of this offense.

Let's flash back to the accidental collision of skate blade to the unprotected neck of Richard Zednik.

Skate blades are sharp. Sharp steel can inflict a powerful amount of mayhem when used inappropriately.

Anyone who has seen the video of the 6'4" Pronger dispensing hard justice to the leg of the prone Kesler can't possibly argue that intent was inherent.

Kesler's reaction, unlike the NHL's response, was pretty clear-cut and definitive.

"He stomped on me," Kesler told reporters in Vancouver after the game. "He got me on the calf."

Here's what I think about that.

Good for you Ryan Kesler. It's about time we hear from some young players who don't feel intimidated about expressing an opinion. Thank you, Ryan, for taking the time to call out the elder statesman. Too often, younger players are afraid to take on the old boy structure of a league that is mired in the anthropologic equivalent of the cave man complex.

Colin Campbell, the NHL VP responsible for adjudicating such rampant acts of mayhem has repeatedly sagged like a sack of flour when assessing fines, suspensions and punishment on members of the old guard or to players who, for whatever reason, possess a cachet that populates arenas. He gave 30 games to Chris Simon – an average utility player with a penchant for lumber-enhanced mayhem - for a similar act. Campbell is taking pops from pundits for a wishy-washy double standard. The pops are deserved. Coley is crunching numbers. Coley is counting beans. Coley is showing the backbone of leach. Coley is giving Pronger the old boy's nod. Because Pronger puts butts in the seats.

Here's what I think about that.

Hey Coley. Hey Coley Campbell! Yoooo-hoooo! Over here! Call Judge Wopner. Call Judge Judy. Hell, call "Here com' da' judge" from *Laugh In*. Call someone. Call anyone. But for god's sake call. Get out of the jurisprudence business and find someone with the guts and backbone to stand up and be counted. Hell, call NFL commissioner Roger Goodell. He's not afraid to make a call. Geez, I'll go one better. Call a medium. Resurrect the ghost of Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis. He suspended Shoeless Joe Jackson and seven other Chicago White Sox players for life. For gambling.

Here's what I think about that.

Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis would make it clear to Mr. Pronger that jeopardizing the career of another professional is just not kosher. It smacks of superciliousness. It's ugly. It's repulsive. And Mountain Landis would impress upon Mr. Pronger that incidents of this nature cannot be tolerated. Kenesaw Mountain Landis would ensure that the punishment fit the crime.

Here's what I think about that.

There is a biography out there about ol' Mountain Landis. It's in hardcover. And it weighs about 45 pounds. Someone get a copy fedexed over to Coley Campbell's office. Send it express-expedited-overnight. And make a special note that it should be delivered with a firm thunk upside of Coley's prodigious noggin.

Here's what I think about that.

Wow. What a great idea. But I digress.

Here's what the haughty Mr. Pronger had to say.

"There's a line that needs to be drawn. I went over the line and I deserve the suspension."

Here's what I think about that.

Chris Pronger, in spite of his predilection for pandemonium knows he caught a break from the benevolent Col Campbell.

Here's what I think about that.

Long live the double standard. Let's all do the wave for the maintenance of the status quo. The rich get richer and real justice is always reserved for the serfs and the peons. Ask Steve Downie. Ask Chris Simon. The Kings ride free. Workers of the World unite? A sucker's castle in the sky. Reality bites. And sometimes elbows. And sometimes comes via swift boot.

Here's what Pronger's GM, the ever chipper Brian Burke, had to say after the decision.

"We support this decision. This doesn't belong in our game and he (Pronger) knows that," said Burke.

Here's what I think about that.

Good Brian. Verrrry Good. Now! Stop there please. Cos' I think I hear a ***but*** coming… please Brian… pretty, pretty please… stop there… someone end the interview… please!

Holy cow. And alas. Here comes Burkey with that big, bad, but. Take it away Burkey!

"This is a physical game and we want that in the game. I don't think he can change and I don't think he will change."

Here's what I think about that.

Hey Burkey. News flash. I just got off the horn with my Medium and Tarot Card Reader, Beverly Sills.

Here's what Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis has to say on that, via the great ethereal beyond:

"Won't change? Can't change? HAH! I beg to differ Mr. Burke. Let the punishment fit the crime… 30 games and the duration of the 2008 playoffs… without pay. I have found that when the penalty fits the crime… that players often reshape their lofty opinions about themselves and, subsequently, their place in the game. You see, Mr. Burke. No one player should ever supersede… ***the game.***"

Here's what I think about that.

Nice one Judge. ■

" ... And if pepper spray has no effect and he continues to argue the call, slap him with a technical foul."

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Students Shine through Speeches

Back Row :Drew Hewitt, Devyn Newton & Laura Pottier
Front Row: Cassidy Heywood, Tamara Berry & Erin Little

It was a night filled with witty, colourful and descriptive speeches given by Grade 4 – 8 students from Archie Stouffer Elementary School.

Held at the Minden Legion Branch 636 on Tuesday, March 18, from 7 – 9 pm, speakers who beat out other students from their school competition took to the stage. There were a total of six students from the junior level and five from the intermediate. Speakers were able to select their own topics and had a time limit of three to five minutes. Those who judged the competition were chosen from the Branch or the Ladies' Auxiliary.

Both parents and kids say they were impressed by the content of the speeches and how well they were delivered.

"For every one of them to be able to get up there is just awesome," said Tyra Hie of Minden. Her daughter Brenna gave a speech on snakes and why people shouldn't be afraid of them.

"In Grade 2, she didn't join the choir because she was afraid to get up in front of a group of people. Now she did and I'm impressed," said Hie of Brenna's accomplishment. When asked if she was more nervous than her daughter about the final results, she said," I'm not nervous. It doesn't matter whether she wins or loses, all that matters is that she did her best."

"They had fun, they were brave," said another mom Sandra Heywood.

Grade 5 student Erin Little, who went on to place first in the junior level, described how she prepared herself.

"I had a little bit of help from mom," she said. Her speech was about her mom, who is involved in everything she does.

"It usually would take three weeks for me to memorize it. This year it took only a couple of days." She mentioned that this was the second Legion speaking contest she has ever been in.

Brenna Hie

All speakers were awarded at the end of the night, with various amounts of prize money. Those in 1st place received $25, 2nd received $20 and 3rd received $15. Those who finished behind the top three received $5 for participating.

Those who came first in their age category will go on to compete against other students in Haliburton on Saturday, March 29. These other competitors will be from the Haliburton branch level. Those who place in the top spots in Haliburton will go on to speak at the finals in the district level.

"This is an excellent experience," said Francine Newton, one of the organizers and Minden Legion members. "It's really good for kids. I think it's important for them to get up there in front of people. It develops all kinds of skills," she said.

Newton also added that she'd like to see other age groups take part in the contest.

"I'd like to see the younger grades, one, two and three get involved again. They used to participate, but I think time or curriculum constraints in school got in the way."

So make sure you come out to the next stage of the competition in Haliburton. There is no admission fee and anyone is welcome to attend. ■

Also at the Legion…

Student is recognized for her achievement in contest

Back in November of last year, Grade 3 Archie Stouffer student Alyssa Sisson created a poster for Remembrance Day. She entered the full colour poster into the legion's annual Poster, Essay and Literary contest and ended up doing very well indeed!.

"She was so pleased and thrilled," said Elaine Davison, Youth Education Chair for the Minden Legion branch. She informed Alyssa just a few days ago that her poster came in second place at the district level.

Alyssa was presented with a certificate and $20 cash after the public speaking contest for her accomplishment. ■

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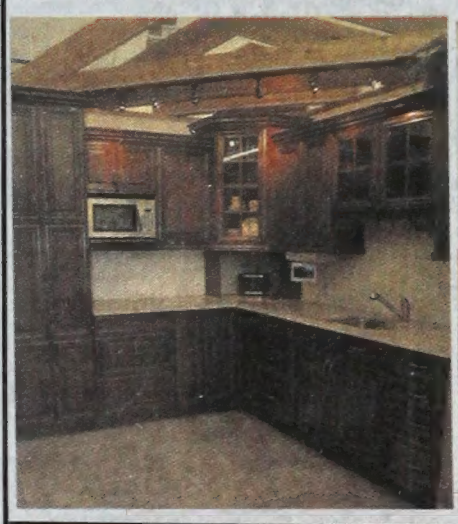

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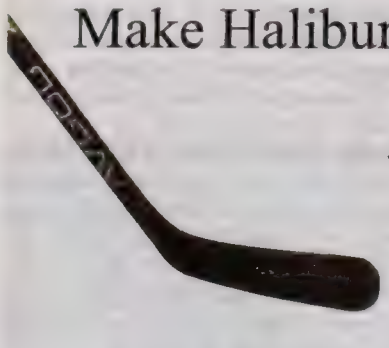


... from pg 8

USA 3-0 to win the 2008 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge. Duchene was named to the All-Star Team.

Duchene is excited about the prospects of the playoffs and the opportunity to play Barrie who swept their series last year.

"I've heard a lot of guys talking about the playoffs and how it's a whole new season," said Duchene. "But I'm the new guy here and I haven't experienced that yet. I'll have to wait and see what it's like. I do know that it's going to be a lot more intense than the regular season."

Of course as the playoffs begin, friends and family will be making the trek to Barrie and Brampton.

Both Duchene and Hodgson said that they appreciate the level of support from the Haliburton faithful.

The Brampton Battalion has become the adopted franchise of many young and old hockey fans in the highlands.

"When we played in Peterborough last week, it was really great to see all of the people there at the game," said Hodgson. "They were cheering us on, wearing Battalion jerseys, and it's really nice to get that kind of support especially when you're on the road."

"Come playoff time, especially if we're playing Barrie we'll be playing to a full house, because those teams will bring fans to the playoffs, and I know that I'm also very happy to see the fans from Haliburton at our games," said Duchene. "It means a lot to us, but it does put some pressure on me to do well," he added with a chuckle.

Of course, Duchene and Hodgson, should be up to the task.

Remember? It was just last Easter that they led their team to a win in the A-Side Final of the Coby Tournament.

After that, the OHL playoffs should be a salsa through the park.

Right?

The wink is implied.

Overtime: The Brampton Battalion will open its best-of-seven Eastern Conference quarterfinal series against the Barrie Colts at home at 7 p.m. Thursday.

The Battalion, which finished first in the Central Division and is seeded second in the conference, faces the seventh-seeded Colts, who finished fourth in the division, in the playoffs for the fourth time. Following is the series schedule: Thursday, March 20, at Brampton 7 p.m.; Saturday, March 22, at Barrie 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, March 23 at Brampton 6 p.m.; Tuesday, March 25, at Barrie 7:30 p.m.; *Thursday, March 27, at Brampton 7 p.m.;*Saturday, March 29, at Barrie 7:30 p.m.; *Monday, March 31, at Brampton 7 p.m. ■

Great Day, Big Fish

A Sunday Afternoon On The Lake

George Farrell
County Voice

Sunday March 16th was a beautiful, sunny and mild day. Allan Kellett, his wife Karen and daughter Asha were up at the cottage, as they are on most weekends. Their cottage is located close to where the Gull River empties into the lake. The gorgeous day drew them all outside, and they decided to jump in the Argo and go out on the lake, and do a spot of fishing.

Allan dug a few holes through the ice, while the two women happily read books in the sunshine and warmth emanating off the snowy surface of Gull Lake. Allan, an avid fisherman who prefers to use a jiggin' stick, let his minnow spin slowly down into the depths. He was fishing near the mouth of the river, in about 50 feet of water, working the minnow just off the bottom.

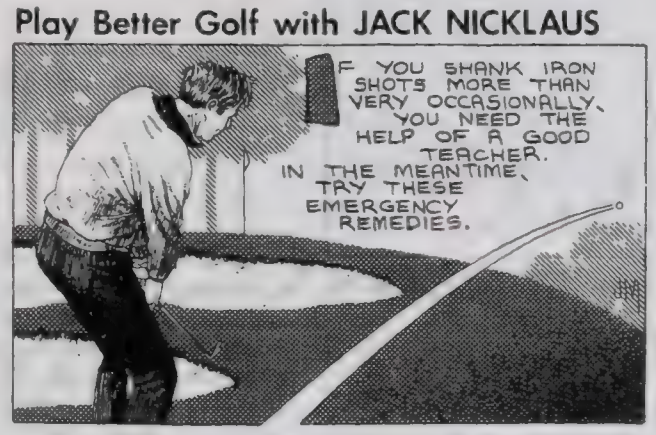
While Karen and Asha continued to read neighbour Paul Tessier pulled up on his snow machine to have a chat. Then all heck broke loose. "The fish hit, and I knew it was a big one for sure," says Allan. "They're just really heavy and this one was a fighter. I've never caught one that big in this area. I realized when I started to haul him in that I didn't have a gaff with me. Our friends Dave and Darlene Pettis were fishing out of their hut not too far away, and I started yellin' over to Dave 'I need a gaff,' but they didn't hear."

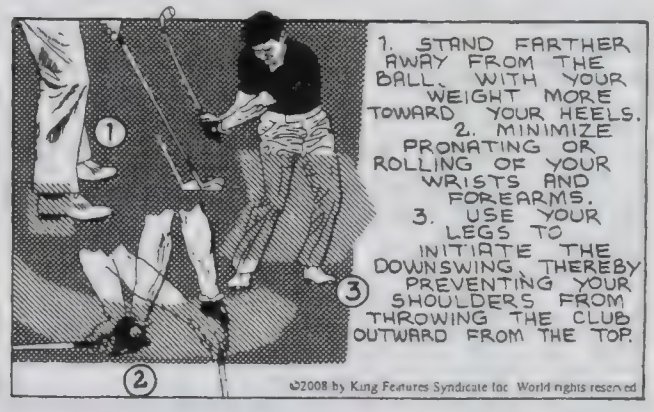
Allan continued to reel in the monster, and Paul went over to get Dave. "Dave soon came over with the gaff, and we continued to struggle bringing the fish up. It seemed to take forever, though it was probably no more than five minutes. He was scrappin' all the way: we could see him, and how big he was. Dave gaffed him behind the gill, and he hauled him up and out," Allan recalls. It was a beautiful lake trout.

Needless to say Karen and Asha had stopped reading, and were taking in the exciting action. Darlene, an ardent fisher woman who has caught 10 and 13 lb lake trout before, was also excited by the size of the fish. "We weighed him, and he tipped the scales just shy of 16 lbs," says a rightfully proud Allan. We just went out for the four o' clock feeding, and it paid off big-time, that's for sure," he says, still marveling at his good luck. "We took him to Ron's taxidermy out of Woodville, and he's going to do a nice mount for us."

Allan Kellett is one of the Kellett clan, with deep roots in the Minden area. Allan and Karen are moving back up eventually, and are in the process of building their retirement home on Gull Lake. With fishing like that out the front door, it's no wonder.■

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS





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What's in a Tax Notice?

What will Minden Hills residents see included with their tax notices this year? That is, other than another hike in taxes? A recent request by the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation to Council to insert fund raising notices with the tax notices was turned down. The decision was based on Municipal Policy #24 that restricts what's allowed to be included with the tax bills. But the Foundation is sticking to their guns and another request for consideration has Council looking at things from a different perspective.

HHHS Executive Director Dale Walker appeared before Council last week to address the matter personally and to ask Council to reconsider their decision. Walker says the notices are crucial to the Foundation's fund raising program and provide taxpayers with information of their ongoing activities. In an e-mail to Clerk Cheryl McCarroll, Walker spoke of the Foundation's disappointment in Council's decision, saying that they had received mixed messages concerning the outcome of the decision.

Walker says "the Foundation is a prime part of the infrastructure of both the County and the community". According to Walker, many Municipalities fund their hospitals and medical centres generously, adding assurances that the Foundation was not asking for funding, but simply a way to partner with the Council to assist with their fund raising initiatives. Walker added that both Highlands East and Dysart have agreed to the request to include HHHS inserts into the tax notices. Councillor Peter Oyler asked if the request would result in any additional cost to the Municipality and Walker responded there would be no additional postage and even offered volunteers to help stuff the notices.

Deputy Reeve Cheryl Murdoch referred to their policy saying that Council had made an exception with the Foundation in the past to assist them until their primary debt load was paid down. She also voiced her concern that the request would be made annually. Walker responded that this was their primary medium to fund capital requisitions for health care facilities. She spoke of the many worthy charities in the community, but argued that the Foundation keeps people employed in Minden Hills, which is a major part of the economic structure of the community and their request should be given further consideration.

Policy #24 was adopted back in 2002 when the Municipality starting receiving too many requests for assistance to consider. Recognizing the possibility for increased costs, not to mention the difficulty in determining a selection process Council decided that only documents associated with municipal business would be allowed. At present this would include details of Council's annual budget, recycling initiatives or other notices aimed at keeping residents informed of ongoing municipal activities.

Councillor Oyler acknowledged his bias as the Chair of the Foundation but said that it is the single charity in the County that has the potential to touch everyone. He concurred that there are other very worthwhile charities, but said that the Haliburton County Hospital had reached over 30,000 people last year alone. Oyler said there will always be a need for capital funding for the hospital and urged Council to rethink their decision, arguing that some day each of them would likely need the services of the hospital.

Councillor Reid agreed that it was a worthwhile cause, but suggested that if Council was going to proceed they must first look at their policy and amend it. Reeve Jim McMahon agreed, adding that if Council was going to change the policy to help the Health Services Board, they might as well include their intention to assist them annually. Walker said that would be the ideal situation, but that the Foundation would be more than willing to return with their request each year. Councillor Ratcliffe also agreed that the policy should be revised. Councillor Reid said that in no way had their decision or comments suggested that they don't support the hospital, but given their policy on the matter it would be unfair to other causes who have fewer resources than the Foundation and don't have access to municipal mailing. Reid reiterated that Council had only agreed to this in the past to help the hospital pay down their debt. Reid added that if Council was to reconsider the terms of their policy she would want to discuss how other groups would be handled.

In response to Reid's comments, Walker concurred that the Foundation is the only organization in the area with the infrastructure to conduct fund raising, but added that they also have the greatest amount of fund raising to be done. She said "The insert is the one real way to reach all taxpayers and partnership with the municipality is very important to us!"

Councillor Oyler suggested that when looking at and considering how to help other charities Council should examine their books to determine how much money was put into administrative costs as opposed to actual funding for tangible purposes.

At the end of the day, Council seemed to be in agreement to amend their policy to allow inserts from the Foundation to be included with tax notices on an ongoing basis. At the same time, discussions indicated that the policy will be reviewed to determine whether other fund raising groups could be offered similar levels of assistance. ■

Minden Hills Residents Can Expect a 2.9% Tax Hike

Minden Hills Council gave the nod to their draft budget last week and it looks like pretty good news for residents. The increase for home owners will be kept to a dull roar at 2.9% over the 2007 residential tax rate. Council had initially anticipated the increase may have been as high as 5%. Total expenditures for the year amount to a whopping $10,522,290. Total non tax revenues are estimated at $6,096,770 leaving a Municipal tax levy of $4,425,520. The municipal tax level has increased 4.6% overall from 2007.

During the Council meeting last week, Councillor Peter Oyler, as the Chair of the Finance Committee, reviewed in some detail the process followed by the Municipality in establishing the budget each year as well as the highlights of the 2008 budget. Oyler commented that all departments had worked diligently to achieve the budget, which also reflects the desire by the majority of Council to effect certain aesthetic improvements in Minden Hills. In particularly Oyler commented on Phase 1 of the River Walk Project planned for completion by the Sesquicentennial and funded entirely by gas tax revenues from 2006 to 2008 and a Trillium grant.

Oyler reported having discussions with representatives of MPAC and advised that the freeze on assessments, which has been in place for the last three years, will be lifted this year. He said that recommendations are being proposed to allow any large increases in assessment to be phased in over a four year period in order to reduce the impact on ratepayers. It should be noted that these recommendations have not yet been finalized. Oyler also commented that this would create the potential for increased revenue to the municipality.

Councillor Reid voiced her concern about potential 'windfalls' for the Municipality and how they might be perceived, but Oyler suggested that the increased revenue would give Council several options including the ability to decrease tax rates or to place money in reserves for capital improvement projects or acquisitions. Councillor Obee voiced his concern about maintaining adequate reserves, particularly for public works given the potential for catastrophes. He used a bridge failure as a prime example. Obee reminded Oyler of Council's decision in the past to maintain one million dollars in the public works reserve. Councillor Ratcliffe shared Obee's concerns, saying that he didn't want to see the Municipality having to finance the purchase of vehicles or equipment as was the case in other municipalities in the County. Oyler confirmed that reserves for Public works were much greater than anticipated when setting the 2007 tax rates, with a balance of $1,176,000 and suggested that the potential to make large contributions to reserves would be greater with increased assessments in subsequent years, should Council wish to proceed that way.

Treasurer Mary Jane Irwin cautioned Council that a lot was still contingent on grant applications, adding that there would be considerable debt if these applications were not successful. Councillor Obee stated that he would be very concerned about going into a deficit position in the operations budget. Irwin advised Council that they will know whether they are successful with their grant applications within the next two weeks.

Councillor Oyler said he would like to move that the budget be adopted at the next Council meeting and asked that the required by-laws be brought forward at that time. He concluded discussions by commenting that he felt the Council had a responsible budget that will allow them to move forward. ■

OBSIDIAN HEADED FOR GREAT THINGS

... from pg 1

The boys from Obsidian chillin' before the show at the Northwoods this past weekend

On the 31st of March, Obsidian face off "song for song" with Sons and Lovers at a new club called Tattoo Rock Parlour at 567 Queens St. W

-- conceived seven years ago – seems, like all good things, somehow fated. Bass player Kevin Brezina and guitarist Andrew Postlethwaite grew up together in Minden and Haliburton. The two were attending Queens University when they met the Kingston-born Turi. Apparently "he was the only other cool guy on the floor." They began "jamming together in coffee houses." They "went through a lot of drummers" before they found Phillip Elliott. Elliott, from White Snake Lake -- a little town of 300 people -- has that quiet volcanic intensity one would expect from a serious "Death and Roll" drummer.

For a while the group covered 'Tool' songs, a complex heavy metal alternative band that transcended their Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin roots and brought us into a new musical millennium. Obsidian had the musical chops to pull it off, particularly with Turi Mercuri's vocal range and dexterity. The band now writes their own songs -- collectively. Turi says they like to keep Obsidian lyrics "ambiguous", open to interpretation so people "can put their own story in it." That's part of the lure and power of 'Tool' and perhaps all great music -- the suggestion of something deeper and more meaningful than mere words can convey.

The unit was complete once Obsidian hired local phenomenon and multi-instrumentalist Ryan Chalmers three years ago to play guitar. He'd just come off touring with recording artist FeFe Dobson.

On Friday March 14th, in that brief interval between setting up gear and running a sound check, I find Obsidian around a table at the Northwood in Haliburton. The guys have been writing furiously and gigging solidly for a year. The energy is high. They are psyched about having made the final round in Toronto's Battala Rockstar Battle of the Bands. The contest has received a lot of publicity. Media exposure continues to mount with a recent appearance on E Talk. Their fan base is growing. After taking on the Battala, the Obsidian website www.myspace.com/darkshinyrock began getting 900 hits a day.

On the 31st of March, Obsidian face off "song for song" with Sons and Lovers at a new club called Tattoo Rock Parlour at 567 Queens St. W. The judges are top music journalist Karen Bliss (Rollingstone Magazine), Juno Award Winning producer Gavin Brown (Billy Talent/ Three Days Grace) and Jeremy Taggart of Our Lady Peace. The bands are judged on creativity & originality, musicianship, songwriting ability and performance. Obsidian has thus far ousted their opponents. If they come out on top this time, they'll win the coveted title of 'Canada's Next Rock Stars', and receive $25,000 in prizes which includes $10,000 worth of studio time and a slot as an opening act on stage with a major label band.

Publicist Andrea Caldwell can easily hear Obsidian on radio. They write "hook-driven melodies," she says, and "any hard rock station that plays Linkin Park or Nine Inch Nails would play".

Was there life before Obsidian? Like Bob Dylan said: "Don't Look Back". The guys cut-up, teasing about their time as Dungeons and Dragons nerds… or was that Hockey and Soccer geeks? And naturally Phil denies ever having played Solitaire for 100 hours straight in the nude. No wonder they can laugh: There's nothing like rip-roaring rock-hard, heavy music for the positive release of obsessions and pent-up aggression.

Obsidian's itinerary for April includes alternate dates with Karnaj, the Wolves of Anson and Fathom Ties in Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec City.

Check for updates from 'Sidizens For the Advancement of Dark Shiny Rock' on Facebook (which I'm told is slowly taking over MySpace for sheer cyber-visibility).

Andrea Caldwell – Operations Manager can be reached at 416 855-5564 or sidizen44@gmail.com. For more information on the Battle of the Bands visit www.battalarockstars.com.

If you can, get out and support Obsidian in Toronto on March 31st. No matter how the chips fall, this band is headed for great things. ■

Letters to the Editor cont'd...

Cabooses: Is there no End?

Editor's note: in our report of the meeting on February 8th, 2008, held to discuss the fate of the Caboose at Head Lake Park we quoted one participant as stating that there were only three cabooses left in Ontario. The next week Nancy Goetz wrote us a letter saying that there were dozens of loose cabooses scattered around the province. This week we received the following letter from Mr. Eddie Lehman of Northshore Road, Haliburton, stating that he was the person who made the 'three cabooses claim'. Mr. Lehman writes:

Dear Editor:

I am the person, Eddie Lehman of Maple Lake, who told the February 8th meeting that I had heard there were only three cabooses left in Ontario. Except, that's not what I said. I stated clearly that I had read that there were only three "derelict and restorable" cabooses left in Ontario. Nancy Goetz is quite correct when she says that there are cabooses everywhere, but they are almost all rebuilt and refurbished. I believe that there are two derelict cabooses in Northern Ontario, and the one here in Haliburton.

I believe that this is a grand opportunity for the Municipality and the County to actually accomplish something that everybody can see and enjoy. The history of Haliburton is fascinating, but unfortunately old "Artefacts" and the "Elderly" are disappearing fast.

As far as I am concerned, there are two possible locations fitting for the caboose. One, next to the Rails End Gallery, and possibly connect the two of them together, and Two, over at the high school behind the Steam Engine.

That's all for now: keep the pressure up!

Eddie Lehman
Northshore Road
Maple Lake, Haliburton. ■

Film Policy Debate Continues in Minden Hills

Liz Danielsen
Staff Reporter

The County just can't seem to get total buy-in to their proposed film policy as it continues to be a matter for debate in Minden Hills. So far it's two Councils for and two against. Once again, Bob Smith, Director of Economic Development, Tourism & Marketing for the County presented the policy and guidelines to a Council who was not prepared to offer their support right off the cuff.

As stated in correspondence to Council, the policy is intended to offer a uniform and consistent method of approving requests for filming in Haliburton County as well as enhancing the county's presence in Ontario and future opportunities to be a 'shoot' location. Smith says the intent of the process is to expedite approvals to film makers while ensuring those affected are informed and protected.

Smith assured Council that "the policy is not intended to be onerous, but to make the County more appealing to the applicant." Smith also told Council that the policy was not intended for filming of current events or for films being made by not for profit groups. He did say, however, that even not for profit groups may have to go through the application process if their activities plan to include anything "out of the ordinary." Smith admitted that concerns have been raised by other municipalities about the policy being censorial in nature, particularly the section that suggests exclusion of films that might be x-rated, violating local, provincial or federal laws and in particular those that may be considered to be 'distasteful to the general public." He said he understood these concerns and was more than willing to address them. Smith reassured Council that the document was a work in progress and if his committee and the County Council determined that the clause should not be included, it would be withdrawn.

Reeve Jim McMahon asked who the County proposed to police the policy. Smith reported that the question had been raised and suggested that enforcement would be passed down to the local jurisdictions so as not to duplicate levels of by-law enforcement, adding that there was no intent tot take authority away from the municipalities.

Smith advised Council that the County wanted to seek buy-in from the municipalities prior to establishing a formal by-law adopting the policy. He reiterated that the policy was a work in progress and promised to take the recommendations of all the Council's back to the County for further discussion. In the meantime, no decision was made to adopt the film policy by Minden Hills Council. ■

An Offer that Can't be Refused.....

Liz Danielsen
Staff Reporter

Can Pritchard House be saved?

According to Minden Hills Council, they have a liability in Pritchard House; something to be torn down at a cost of $20,000 from the taxpayers pockets. At least that's what their decisions over the past year would lead us to believe. But it might just be possible that the lovely stone building will be given a reprieve.

Last week, Council was offered a deal, an offer that sounds like something they'd be hard pressed to refuse. According to Sharon Luke and her fellow enthusiasts, The Pritchard House Preservation Society is prepared to take full responsibility for saving the building and through their efforts will be offering Council an asset worth at least a quarter of a million dollars in return. They're willing to fund raise to the tune of $97,000 or more, acquire all the necessary labour and materials needed to make improvements not only to bring the building up to code, but make it more attractive and finally to oversee all of the work.

> "It's the combination of history and heritage that make a community unique from its neighbours.

Council's decision to demolish the building was based on several factors. No repairs or improvements have been made to the building in over 10 years. Provincial law mandates that the Municipality bring all of their buildings up to Building Code standards which include wheelchair access and barrier-free washrooms. And according to Luke, cost estimates received by Council in the Spring of 2007 indicated that repairs and improvements would cost as much as $150,000. Given the investment they would have to make, Council decided on demolition. Coincidentally, 2007 would have been the Hand Weavers & Spinners 10th anniversary as tenants in the building. Instead, they and U-Link who share the space upstairs were given notice by the Municipality to vacate the building by March of 2008.

Built in the early 1940's, the house on Milne Street was the home of Lawrence Pritchard, a former Reeve of the Township and Warden of Haliburton County. In her presentation to Council Luke spoke of the community's heritage as a non renewal resource, with Pritchard House being a perfect example for Minden Hills. She read out the definition of heritage; something that says it all when trying to save historical buildings in a community. Heritage "represents something that is bequeathed or handed down from one generation to another." Luke also said "it's a combination of history and heritage that make a community unique from its neighbours." While speaking to Council, Luke agreed that the beautiful old building does need some TLC, but the Preservation Society would like to offer their time and energy to complete a viable restoration.

When the decision was made to demolish the building, a number of people involved with textiles in one way or another and who had a 'connection' to the house got together to see if they could come up with a plan. That was the beginning of the Pritchard House Preservation Society. Initially the Society thought that if they could save the building, they would have somewhere to stay, but now Luke says "unfortunately, even with the renovations, the building will have to be rented out as we can't commit to any large sum of rent." The group was joined by Jim Blake, and through the auspices of the Haliburton County Community Co-Op (Co-Op), they contacted a consultant to have a look at the building. In November they submitted a letter to the Municipality asking that demolition be held off in anticipation of a presentation by the Society. Council gave the Society a deadline of March 13th, the date of their most recent meeting.

Luke says things really got rolling in January of this year. She says "David Turney did a wonderful job for us, and finding it an interesting project to work on, completed an extremely detailed report." Turney provided a number of options including everything from selling the building and land to retaining the building, completing detailed repairs and improvements and leasing it out. Real Estate estimates were sought which indicated the value of the building as it stands now at $140,000 but after upgrades at approximately $250,000. The report outlines everything that needs to be done to upgrade the building, bring it up to code by installing lifts and wheel chair ramps and barrier free washrooms, remove asbestos insulation and make aesthetic improvements to both the inside and exterior of the building. The wheelchair ramp will be installed on the side of the building to maintain the aesthetic appearance of the front of the building.

The Society plans to apply for a Trillium Grant to fund the wheelchair lift, to provide labour and material in kind valued at $15,000 and to take out an interest free loan from the Haliburton County Development Corporation for the remainder of the

cont'd... pg. 15...

Prichard House Cont'd...

... from pg. 14

"I just can't see Council shooting themselves in the foot!"

work. Luke says the Society, if they're successful with their proposal to Council, will seek a long term lease of the building at a reasonable rate (considering the time, energy and money they have invested). The Co-Op would like to lease the building and have a number of organizations under their umbrella seeking office space as well. The plan is to have three offices upstairs and two downstairs.

Prior to Council's decision to tear down Pritchard House a Master Gardeners Group approached Municipal staff with blueprinted plans to landscape all of the property and turn it into a heritage garden. This would not only improve the exterior appearance of the property, but would also encourage tourism visits to the building. The garden was also intended to become a teaching garden to assist other groups when developing heritage plans. Unfortunately, a halt was called to this plan just prior to Council's decision to tear the building down. Luke says that while no formal agreement is in place and the work would not be as extensive, the Master Gardeners may still work on the landscaping if Council gives them the red light.

Several members of Council spoke about how well prepared the Society's report was and how much they appreciated the time and energy put into the project. Councillor Rick Ratcliffe suggested that the report be turned over to Bob Romberg, Environmental & Property Operations Manager for Minden Hills, which all Council concurred with. Several questions were posed about the society's funding strategy. Councillor Reid stated that a response to a Trillium Foundation grant application would not likely be received until October, and asked if the project would proceed if the application was turned down. Luke confirmed that the Society had plans to go ahead with some of the work right away, adding that if the Trillium grant was unsuccessful, other fund raising plans would be put in place. In response to a query by Councillor Oyler about taking out the second floor which would alleviate the need for the lift, Luke responded that should their application for funding be turned down they may have to consider that option, but the potential for revenue after renovations would be greatly reduced.

Deputy Reeve Cheryl Murdoch voiced her pleasure in seeing a group approach Council with such a refreshing approach. Murdoch said most groups have a "we want and you can pay" attitude, but in this case the Preservation Society are willing to take on all of the responsibility. Murdoch also said she felt this was an excellent opportunity to work together with a group. Reeve Jim McMahon commented on how well the project had been researched and that he looked forward to hearing from the Municipality's operations people.

Will there be strings attached if Council approves the Society's proposal? Most likely, but they certainly sound fair and make sense. Luke says that if Council is already considering a $20,000 demolition expenditure, they should be able to see the fairness of committing the same amount towards the improvements, particularly when they'll have such a valuable asset in their pocket at the end of the project. The Society would also like to enter into a long term lease agreement with the municipality to reduce the debt load assumed by the Society. Luke says that all of the income from the building should go towards paying down the Society's debt and then go towards utilities and maintenance of the building. She says "the building would be self sustaining and all of Council's headaches will be taken over by others." Luke says the Society is getting positive feedback, considering the value of the building and how useful it will be after the renovations are done. Luke also says "I just can't see Council shooting themselves in the foot!"

The membership of the Pritchard House Preservation Society originates from those very same weavers, knitters or quilters who occupied or have a common interest in the building. The members include Sharon Luke and Susan Sheehan, as signing members, Sharon's husband Rob, Marjorie Ludlow-Green, Pat Dearborn, Marion Gillanders and Jim Blake of the Haliburton County Community Co-Op. It is their sincere hope that the building will remain a gracious asset to the Council and community overall for a long time to come. For more information on Pritchard House or to sign their petition go to www.pritchardhouse.ca. In the meantime, stay tuned for Council's official response. ■

County Wide Crime Spree Continues

Officers from the Haliburton Highlands Detachment are investigating several break and enters that were reported yesterday. It is believed the entries occurred late Monday March 17th or early in the morning of March 18th, 2008.

The victims include, Country Rose Garden Centre, St.George's Anglican church, Lakeside Baptist church and Hawk River Construction. All are within the Village of Haliburton. Officers are also investigating a break in that occurred during the same time frame at North Steel on the Gelert Rd.

A scenes of crime officer from the Haliburton Highlands Detachment attended the scene in an attempt to locate any physical evidence left behind by the culprits. This is the second time in two months that St. George's Anglican Church has been entered.

Anyone with information on this occurrence is asked to call the O.P.P. Communications Centre at 1-888-310-1122 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477). Crime Stoppers is completely anonymous and does not subscribe to call display. You will not testify in court and you may be eligible for a cash reward of up to $2000.

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CLOSED FOR SEASON- October

MAY1-MAY 24 Group Show
Meet the Artist Night-
Wed. May7. 7:00 P.M.
Rose Pearson Painting
Jane Selbie Painting With Fabric
Tom Lambert Potter
Terry Craig Glass
Janet Donald Wright Painted Furniture

MAY 27-JUNE14 Group Show
Meet the Artist Night-
Wed. June 4. 7:00 P.M.
Pauline Holancin/JakeMol Paintings
Sandy Cline Stone Carving
Jan Fitch Bird Carving
Bruce Lepper Bird Carving
John Leeder Bird Carving
Barb Peel Pottery

JUNE 17-JULY 5 Group Show
Meet the Artist Night-
Wed. July 2. 7:00 P.M.
Rod Prouse Paintings
Tony Sheila Clennell Wood Fired Pottery
Paulus Tjiang Glass
Doug Stephens Stone Sculpture

JULY 8-JULY 26 Group Show
Meet the Artist Night-
Wed. July 16. 7:00 P.M.
Cassandra Watercolours
Yael Novak Pottery
Wendy Durfey Baskets
Don Taylor Books

JULY29-AUGUST 16 Group Show
Meet the Artist Night-
Wed. Aug.6. 7:00 P.M.
Linda McGillvary Stained Glass
Debra Jackson Acrylics
Colleen O'Reilly-
Lafferty Pottery
Andrew Kuntz Glass

AUG19-Sept.6 Group Show
Meet the Artist Night-
Sat. AUG.23. 2:00 P.M.
Chuck O'Neil Paintings/Wire
Steve Hudak Pottery sculpture

SEPT.9-SEPT.2 Group Show
Meet the Artist Night
Sat.Sept: 13. 2:00 P.M.
Wayne Cardinelli Pottery
Al Van Mil
Annette Blady Paintings
Pam Watson Willow

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The Boys in the Bush

by Stephen Patrick
Photos by Lyn Winans

Captain Beatty Gives the Boss a Hand

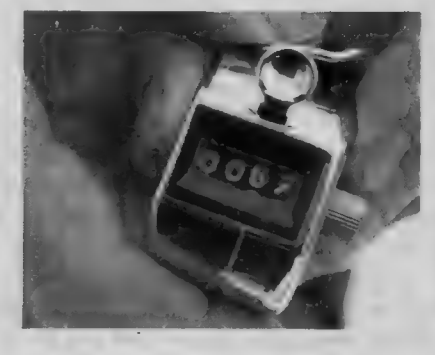
Captain David Beatty, distinguished soldier in the Canadian Armed Forces (and columnist for the County Voice), just returned from the Texas Desert, soon to be deployed to Afghanistan, strides confidently on his beaver tail snowshoes through the deep snow in the Haliburton bush. "This is slave labour, Stephen, absolutely," he says with gritted teeth, and a barely suppressed grin. "The old man gives the orders, and I obey!"

The "old man" is, no surprise, Bill Beatty, David's proud father and together with Anne, David's mum, the proprietors of Beatty's Sugar Bush on the Carroll Road just north of Haliburton Village. Their operation is just one of two sugar bushes in the County that are Certified and Inspected by the Canadian Food and Inspection Agency (Waverley Brook Farm is the other). The Beatty family have been tapping the 100 acres for almost thirty years. The terrible tornado and micro-bursts that hit the property in August of 2006 did some serious damage, but the Beatty's still use up to 500 taps each spring to bring the product to their loyal customers. On this beautiful March morning the Beatty's have invited me and the Voice's intrepid photographer Lyn Winans to tap a few trees and get some fresh air.

Captain Beatty tries to help out his father every year at sugaring time for at least a few days, and this year has travelled from his base in Petawawa for a very quick 24-hour visit. "It's actually a nice change from the Texas desert, that's for sure," he says, as he breaks a trail into the bush with the ease and confidence of an expert. Bill follows with equal expertise, while I stumble a bit, and Winans wonders how she'll find her cameras ever again if she falls over into the deep drifts. "My friends have been trying to get me on snow shoes for years," she muses. "So don't you dare take any pictures of me!"

We follow the Beattys as they systematically place the fragile-looking taps into each tree, up their counter by one, and move on. The lines snake through the bush, joining major lines that lead down to the soon-to-be-installed collection barrels. The sap isn't running yet, but the sun is high, with a hint of March warmth, so it can't be long. "It never runs before St. Patrick's Day anyway," says David, "so everyone can have a proper party before they get to work!"

Father and son work quickly and quietly in the bush, and soon we leave them to it. (We weren't exactly improving their productivity as we lumbered through the snows.) Within a month or two Captain Beatty will be in Afghanistan, the precious sap will have become a few hundreds of litres of great syrup, and these tall sugar maples will be spreading their canopy over the spring landscape, getting ready for another year. But for the moment, peace and tranquillity reign. ■



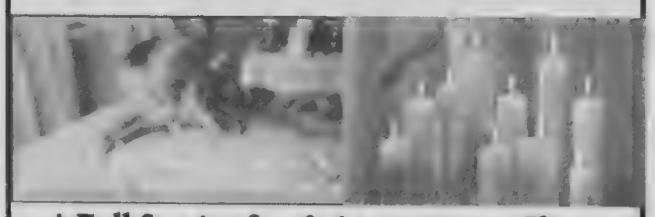
Top Left: Bill Beatty gives Editor Patrick some drilling advice

Top: snowshoeing through the bush.

Left: Photographer Winans contemplates her fate.

Above: Father and Son contemplate the job.

experience the
Wind in the Willows
DAY SPA



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Mrs. Marjory Peel, in her 97th year.

Photos By: Lyn Winans

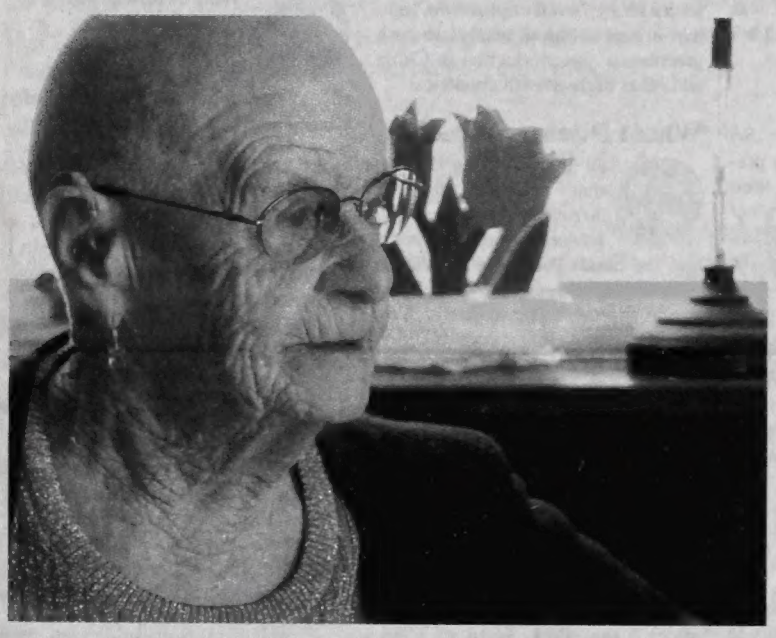
"We came here first to the Red Umbrella Inn – in the 1930s"

Stephen Patrick
Editor

Mrs. Marjory Peel, in her 97th year, has plans. She needs to walk up her icy, snowy driveway, climb into her car and race off to an appointment. "I'm playing cribbage with a bunch of old folks – I don't want to keep them waiting." Fifteen 2, fifteen 4, and look out!

Marjory Peel has lived in Haliburton for over 20 years with her son John Peel, and daughter-in-law Barbara Joy Peel. "But I first came to Haliburton on vacation with my husband Harry to the Red Umbrella Inn on 12 Mile Lake in, I think, 1934. We came here because it was a favourite haunt of Harry's friend Bill McBrien. Bill and Harry used to go fishing on Redstone before there was a soul on it. The men wouldn't pay for a guide for us, and off they'd go: but an Indian guide saw us ladies, Bill's wife and I, and offered to take us to a really good fishing spot. Which he did, and we got a lot of fish, a lot of fish!"

Mrs. Peel was born near Crystal Beach on Lake Erie on August 19th, 1911. When she was 18 she married Constable H.H. Peel of the Ontario Provincial Police. A year later Constable Peel was transferred to Welland from Dunnville as the Welland County Constable. "Harry was responsible for the policing of five townships, including Port Colborne and Long Beach. The Lake Erie shore was a very popular area for summer homes, mainly for Americans: one winter 35 homes were broken into and it turned out to be a big case for Harry. The two young men had stashed most of the loot in a local church – and when they were caught they had a sawed-off shotgun! But Harry wasn't hurt, and they were arrested."



In those days the local Constable's home was the office, and Mrs. Peel was expected to answer the phone at any time of day or night. "Even on vacation they wanted to know your phone number!" One night an OPP officer from Woodstock called and asked for Harry, who was already out on a call. "I said could I help? And he shouted: 'I'll have you know, there are no women on our force!'"

Even in those relatively peaceful times there were incidents of great danger and stress. Mrs. Peel remembers a terrible case of a domestic disturbance involving a family with seven children. "His name was Joe Kovacs, and he had a history of bad behaviour when he was drunk. He lived in Crowland, just by Welland. One evening his wife threatened to call the police and Joe replied that if she did he'd shoot the officer dead. Well, she did call, and the Crowland officer went to the house, and sure enough, Joe shot him dead. He was convicted, and sentenced to hang. He was the last man to be hanged at the Welland jail."

These were also desperate economic times, with the Depression forcing thousands of men to roam the countryside looking for work. "They'd congregate in colonies near town, hundreds of them, in what we used to call the jungles. And often Harry would have to go down and ask around for information and for help. But the men were never threatening and usually helped if they possibly could."

In 1952 Harry was head of the Barrie OPP when he was felled by a massive coronary, leaving Marjory with a tiny pension and two children, Nancy (14) and John (11). "The OPP did what they could for me," she remembers, "and there was in fact a pension -- $76.76 a month! In those days it did actually help a little. The children and I moved back to the Niagara Falls area and in 1954 I got a job on the line with what was then MacKinnon Industries, which a few years later was bought by General Motors. That little pension paid the mortgage on my house. And General Motors was a generous employer, with benefits and later on a pension."

Mrs. Peel worked for many years on the GM line, "which was tough work, I can tell you," until she finally moved into the Service Shipping area where she stayed until she retired. In the late 1970s "Premier Davis reviewed the OPP pensions and gave us a raise, finally, which was a really good."

The OPP celebrates its 100th anniversary next year, and Marjory Peel is certain to receive some attention and publicity with her unique knowledge and appreciation of early OPP life. Meanwhile, her great enthusiasm and zest for life continues to bring joy to her neighbours, friends, and family here in Haliburton. ■

MEAC's 2nd Annual Pet Photo Competition

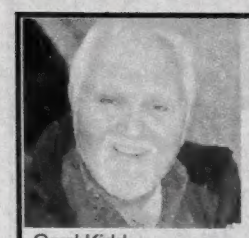
MEAC (Minden Emergency Animal Care) is once again running a pet photo contest for the 2009 edition of our calendar. The primary purpose of the contest is to raise funds to provide medical treatment for injured and sick local homeless pets. Since its creation in April 2007, MEAC has treated and found loving homes for numerous abandoned and injured cats and dogs. ***Happy Endings*** are the best part of belonging to, and supporting MEAC.

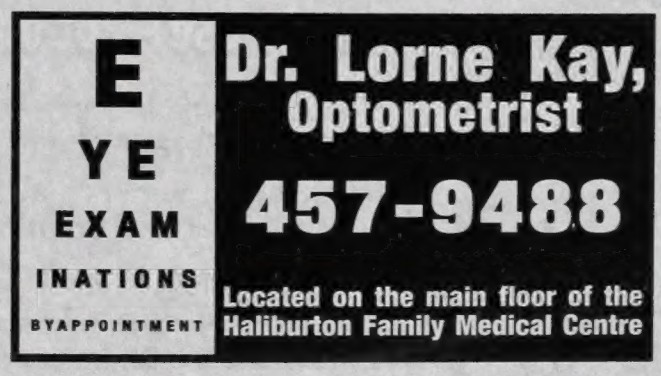
Last year there was a lot of enthusiasm and 161 wonderful pet photos were entered by local and seasonal residents. Last year's entries were capably judged by Martha Perkins and the *Times/Echo* staff, and 48 winning pet pics were printed in the 2008 calendar. This year Joanne Irving and the County Voice/ Communicator crew have agreed to do the judging. Along with earning a place in the calendar, the grand prize photo will be published in *The County Voice* newspaper..... yet one more reason for getting your entries in.

We would like to take this opportunity to extend a special thank you to all the advertisers, the printer, photographers, financial supporters and volunteers who made our first year such a success. Hopefully, with your support, we can continue to help local animals which otherwise would suffer alone.

Watch for photo contest details and for other MEAC events, including Wuffstock which is being held again this summer.

If you are interested in supporting MEAC in any capacity, we would love to hear from you. We can be contacted at .... meac2007@gmail.com. ■





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Earthweek: A Diary of the Planet

By Steve Newman

Amazon Oil Spill

Environmental damage from a huge oil spill caused by a landslide in eastern Ecuador's Amazon region could take a year to clean up, according to the state-owned oil company Petroecuador. About 4,000 barrels of oil were spilled, contaminating the Coca River. Petroecuador said approximately 30 percent of the spill was subsequently recovered, and insurance companies would pay for further cleanup. The Trans-Ecuadorian Oil Pipeline System is capable of transporting 400,000 barrels of oil per day and links oil fields in the Amazon region with the Pacific port of Balao, 310 miles away. The landslide that caused the spill was unleashed by some of Ecuador's stormiest weather in decades.

Blocking Democracy

Residents of one Sri Lankan village were prevented from casting their first vote in 14 years not by Tamil Tiger rebels, but by a herd of wild elephants that blocked the road to the polling booths. Sri Lankan security forces used loudspeakers and sirens to scare away the jumbos in Wellaveli, eventually allowing about 51 percent of registered voters in the eastern Sri Lankan district to cast their ballots. There was no word on what might have drawn the pachyderms to the area.

Earthquakes

Iranian officials say that numerous buildings sustained damage or cracking from a 5.1 magnitude quake that struck the country's far eastern province of South Khorassan. No casualties were reported.

• Earth movements were also felt in western Turkey, western India, northern Chile and Connecticut.

Sino Greenhouse Surge

A new study says that the growth in China's carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions is far outpacing earlier estimates, making the goal of stabilizing atmospheric greenhouse gases much more difficult. Economists at the University of California, Berkeley, and U.C. San Diego examined pollution data from China's 30 provincial entities and found that China's CO_2 emissions will have grown at least 11 percent annually between 2005 and 2010, rather than the 2.5 to 5 percent annual increase predicted earlier. The economists wrote in the *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management* that current climate change forecasts are "overly optimistic," and that urgent action is needed to curb greenhouse gas production in China and other high-growth countries.

Wheat Disease Spreads

A wheat-killing fungus that emerged in East Africa nearly 10 years ago has been spread by winds into the Saudi Peninsula and South Asia, where it threatens to bring about a food shortage. The magazine *New Scientist* reports that spores of Ug99, a virulent strain of black stem rust (*Puccinia graminis*), were drawn from Ethiopia across the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden by Cyclone Gonu, which struck the Persian Gulf region last June. It is feared the fungus has since spread into Iran and possibly neighboring Pakistan, a country critically reliant on its wheat crop. "People will start starving if Ug99 cuts harvests enough to push up grain prices," said Rick Ward of CIMMYT, a leading agricultural institute in Mexico. Experts say the only real remedy will be the development of new wheat varieties that resist Ug99. Such plants are not likely to be available for at least five years.

Indian Ocean Cyclones

High winds and flash flooding from Cyclone Jokwe killed at least 10 people and destroyed more than 10,000 homes along the coast of Mozambique. Officials say that a new color-coded warning system and community-based disaster management allowed local officials to keep fatalities low with early preparation for the storm. Cyclone Jokwe hit Mozambique as parts of the country were still recovering from weeks of flooding that began last December.

• Cyclone Kamba passed over the central Indian Ocean.

Inter-Species Rescue

Wildlife officials in New Zealand say they are amazed at what may be the first documented case of a dolphin rescuing stranded whales and guiding them back to open water. Bottlenose dolphin Moko has regularly played with swimmers and frolicked in the surf at Mahia Beach since she took up residence there nearly a year ago. Whale rescuers say they were about to give up on trying to get two pygmy sperm whales, a mother and her calf, back out to sea when Moko rushed in and began to "communicate" with the two other marine mammals. Conservation officer Malcolm Smith said he could hear the whales and the dolphin making noises, apparently to one another, before Moko escorted the whales through a narrow channel leading to the open sea. "I was not aware dolphins could communicate with pygmy sperm whales, but something happened that allowed Moko to guide those two whales to safety," Smith told reporters.

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Dear Abby

by Abigail Van Buren

WIFE MISSES EX'S FRIENDSHIP AFTER YEARS OF BREAKING UP

DEAR ABBY: My ex-husband and I have remained friends and lovers for the past 37 years. We maintained a relationship that included shared vacations and socializing together. We even talked of living in a retirement home together one day.

Three months ago, he stopped communicating with me. A month later, he sent me a greeting card telling me to "remember our good times always."

My heart has not mended. I cry continuously. I have not contacted him, but I know I deserve more than this because of the nature of our relationship. Abby, how do I handle these emotions, my future, and the social and family events that will be coming up? -- GRIEVING IN DAYTON, OHIO

DEAR GRIEVING: Under the circumstances, your feelings -- and your tears -- are normal. You are grieving for your lost husband. This is a process you should have gone through 37 years ago, when the marriage ended. But because you continued behaving as husband and wife, the strings remained tied.

It would be healthier for you if you had some closure. By that I mean if he had explained why he was ceasing communication. After all this time you deserve some answers -- even if they're painful to hear.

You may need professional counseling to handle your emotions. As to the social and family events that are scheduled, ask a friend to accompany you. Your future will take care of itself.

DEAR ABBY: I am in my 40s, single, and have bought a house. There is no man in my future. My parents helped me by giving me the down payment. They expect me to pay them back plus interest.

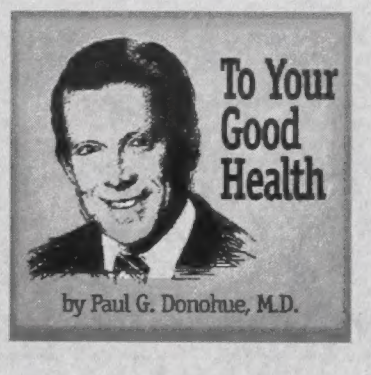
My parents paid for both my sisters' weddings and also helped with the expense for my brother's wedding. Since they didn't have to pay for a wedding for me, I think the down payment should be considered "wedding money," and I should not be required to pay it back. What is your opinion? -- JILTED DOWN SOUTH

DEAR JILTED: What bothers me about your letter is the sense of entitlement it conveys. I assume that at the time your parents loaned you the money, you agreed to the terms. If that's the case, then you should abide by them. You are fortunate your parents were willing (and able) to help you. Residential loans are not easy to get right now.

DEAR ABBY: I always find the letters you print about "pennies from heaven" intriguing. I lost a dear friend to a serious illness a few years ago. I was at work the day after her death, and we were having a severe, unseasonable thunderstorm. I had to wait until it was over to get to my car.

As I approached my car, I noticed a shiny penny -- not on the ground, but on the back of my windshield! The hairs on the back of my neck stood up. I immediately thought of my friend Lisa. She must have known that I had been berating myself for not having been there for her while she was at her sickest point. In my heart, I feel that the penny was Lisa's way of telling me she forgave me for not being a better friend. -- WISH I HAD A SECOND CHANCE

DEAR WISH: Regret is the cancer of life. Rather than looking backward, resolve to do better in the future. We find forgiveness where we look for it -- and if finding the penny was a comfort to you, then it has served its purpose. ■



Aluminum Linked With Alzheimer's Disease?

DEAR DR. DONOHUE: I have heard that aluminum, found in many deodorants, is harmful and can contribute to the development of Alzheimer's disease. Is there any truth to this? Every morning when I put on my deodorant, I think about it. -- M.R.

ANSWER: Aluminum is one of the most plentiful metals on earth, and it's impossible to avoid coming in contact with it. It's in many commonly used items -- food, water, cookware and a number of antiperspirants. It's also true that aluminum has been found in the brain of some Alzheimer's patients. For that reason, a few have raised the possible association of aluminum with Alzheimer's disease.

This matter has been batted about for more than 25 years. Competent investigators have examined the evidence for an association, but no strong proof has been established. Most scientists believe that the tangles of two brain proteins called tau and amyloid (an unusual body product) are the more likely contributors to Alzheimer's disease.

Personally, I do not worry about aluminum. I don't think you need to either.

The booklet on Alzheimer's disease discusses this tragic illness in depth. Readers can obtain a copy by writing: Dr. Donohue -- No. 903W, Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475. Enclose a check or money order (no cash) for $4.75 U.S./$6 Canada with the recipient's printed name and address. Please allow four weeks for delivery.

DEAR DR. DONOHUE: Would you comment on the tattoo craze? Tattoos are seen more frequently these days, and it's hard to imagine that this is a healthy trend. Besides the possibility of infections, what are other undesirable effects? Can they be removed? --N.G.

ANSWER: Close to a quarter of people between the ages of 18 and 50 have at least one tattoo. Why? Self-expression, patriotism (flags), peer pressure, affiliation with certain groups, a testimonial of affection and rebellion are some reasons, and some people find them quite attractive. People have had themselves tattooed for thousands of years. Complications actually are rather rare.

Allergic reactions are possible, and they can take place up to 17 years after getting the tattoo. Disfiguring scars sometimes result. Yellow colors can incite a reaction from sunlight.

Tattoos can be removed. Small ones can be cut off. Larger ones can also be cut off, but removal has to take place in stages. A laser can be used to erase tattoos. A series of treatments is necessary, and often a faint outline of the tattoo remains or a scar forms. Tattoo removal is expensive, something a prospective tattoee should consider. ■

Experiencing The Pioneer Way

It's All About the Essentials

Joan Brown takes kids back to the Pioneer days of 1908

Children learned all about how to "start from scratch" during pioneer days at "Ma's Little House on Head Lake."

During the week of March Break (March 10-14), Haliburton resident Joan Brown put on a workshop at her home that was all about doing things the oldfashioned way.

Along with the teaching assistance of her two daughters, niece and 13-year old granddaughter, kids were able to cook, sew, bake, create art and wash their clothes by hand with homemade soap.

"I want them to learn the pioneer necessities of life," said Brown.

The five-day, hands-on workshops were $175 for the week. The fee went towards covering the costs of supplies and for the time her fellow family helpers devoted to the cause. ■

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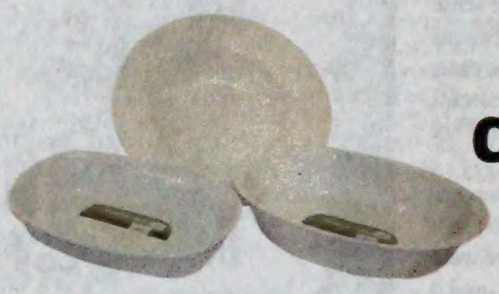

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